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ABSTRACT

The current conflict among opposing sets of cultural ideals is illustrated by several interrelated conditions. The conservative phenomenon is more complex than the traditional liberal-conservative dichotomy would suggest. Changes in societal conditions invite a reexamination of basic assumptions across the broad spectrum of political ideology. Modern technology and a politically active fundamentalist movement enhance and distort the image of the breakdown of our consensus of values, while, in reality, contradictory sets of ideals have always existed. Specific conservative groups must be distinguished not by their stand on one issue, but by how their values cluster along a continuum. Many school-related issues cut across traditional political boundaries, such as taxation, basic skills achievement, discipline, equal educational opportunity, and curriculum design. Those in the field of teacher education must acknowledge the reality of the problems faced by the schools and the need for greater emphasis in the history and philosophy of education, and should expect increased criticism in the future. (FG)

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CONSERVATISM IN AMERICA - WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR TEACHER EDUCATION?

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This discussion is about America's current search for new directions. It is a discussion about society and education, for education is a reflection of the values of a society. It is also a discussion about education and society, for as Jerome Bruner observes:

> One cannot change education without affecting much else in the society as well--if the change takes--and it often fails to do so by virtue of running into a contradictory set of cultural ideals.[1]

Contradictory sets of cultural ideals have always existed in the United States. The current political struggles really represent questions arising from interactions among these sets of divergent ideals; questions which address the future directions of American society. Conflicts concerning such matters as the function of schools, the role of government, and the relationships between individuals and organizations are manifestations in the particular of the overall drama in which we are participating. Whatever resolution occurs in terms of the actual future of society will have implications for education and teacher education.

This discussion centers on five major themes: (1) conservatism, (2) current conditions, (3) the current political scene, (4) issues concerning schooling, and (5) implications for teacher education. Each of these interrelated themes is important in understanding the conflicts among opposing sets of ideals.

Conservatism

Conservatism, which has periodically achieved political ascendancy, has always represented a set of cultural ideals for many in this Nation. However, conservatism is not and has never been a single movement. Rather, conservatism is a series of strands which seem to be converging. The conservatism exemplified by the late Senator Robert Taft of Ohio or the late Senator Everett Dirkson of Illinois seems to be different in degree and kind from the conservatism of the Reverend Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority. The conservatism of the Midwest appears to be different from the conservatism of the Bible-Belt South.

Some strands of conservatism are traceable deep into the history of this Nation. One strand may be linked to the writings of Edmund Burke and exemplified by such learned contemporaries as Russell Kirk. A second strand, less published but nonetheless real, is represented by fiercely independent farmers who accept, in their very fibers, personal independence; even today, although

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many are poor, they still refuse any type of government aid. A third strand is that represented by the religious fundamentalists. Each strand has much in common with the others, yet differences set them very much apart.

A recent issue of Newsweek[2] displayed five categories of conservatives, the "Neoconservatives," the "GOP Establishment," the "Old Right," the "New Right," and the "Religious Right." Different priorities, different sources of financial support, and different focal points of attention were listed for each category. The point here is not whether the categories are correct but the recognition that the conservative movement is not a monolith confined to one party, one religion, or one section of the Nation. When the Reverend Billy Graham criticizes the Reverend Jerry Falwell as being too political and partisan, and when a Newsweek[3] piece is headlined "Is Reagan Not a Reaganite?" clearly conservatism is not an undifferentiated force.

Furthermore, individuals are not bundles of pure ideology who exhibit characteristics which allow for neat categorizations. Individuals may be fiscally "conservative" but "liberal" in religion, racially "liberal" but "conservative" in education, politically "liberal" but socially "conservative," or "liberal" in rhetoric but "conservative" in behavior.

This is not to assert that there is no conservative phenomenon. There are too many commonalities in conservatism to be ignored. Neither is there implication that various aspects of conservatism are not potent political forces. Current events prove otherwise. Rather, the discussion is to suggest that the forces at work are more complex and more difficult to understand than the traditional liberal-conservative dichotomy would suggest.

Current Conditions

Although the explanation that is given frequently for current political trends is that there is a "swing to the right," it is not at all clear that the United States is experiencing such a swing. For example, the recent American Council on Education survey of freshmen in colleges and universities indicated that whereas 1.2% reported themselves as being far right in political orientation (as compared with 0.9% last year), and 17.1% reported themselves as being conservative (as compared with 16.6% last year), 60% indicated that they perceived themselves as being middle of the road in their political views. Whereas the percentage of those reporting as being far right decreased from ten years ago and the percentage of those classified as conservative remained the same, the middle of the roaders increased over the ten year period by approximately 14.6% The increase in the middle of the road category appears to be occurring because of defections from the ranks of those who perceive themselves to be liberal. The percentage who reported themselves as being far left has remained relatively constant over a two-year period, and is about one percentage point less than ten years ago. Interestingly, the percentages for both the far left and the far right categories dropped about the same amount over a ten year period. In contrast, in 1980 only 19.6% reported themselves as being liberal as compared with 22.5% in 1979, and 33.5% ten years ago.[4]

The reported political orientations seem to be balanced by the far left and liberal on one side of the scale and the conservative and far right on the

other, with the majority being at the center. One interpretation which might be given to the growing proportion of middle of the roaders, is that individuals are tending to be less committed to consistent ideological positions, and feel freer to support what seems to be valid from either side of the scale. Although such a single survey is not an adequate foundation for drawing conclusions, the interpretation just given of the survey results, is consistent with some of the other evidence which will be discussed at a later point.

Something far more fundamental is occurring in the United States than a conflict between "conservative" and "liberal" forces. Although conservative strands run deep in American history and have resurfaced, current conditions, not abstract philosophical thoughts, are forcing a reexamination of basic assumptions across the broad spectrum of political ideology. Illustrative that the liberal-conservative framework of analysis is not valid is a report by Tom Wicker in The New York Times Magazine[5] in which he wrote that Senator George S. McGovern, during his last reelection campaign, was told by two elderly women that they would vote against him because he was too liberal. Then Senator McGovern observed the women paying for their groceries with food stamps made possible by a program that he had supported vigorously.

Certain changes in societal conditions have pushed us to an era of questioning, and have highlighted contradictory internally held values. There are at least four current sets of conditions which have reopened the question of societal future: (1) a reduction of faith in the future with a corresponding loss of trust in institutions, (2) a widespread perception that long-held concepts and solutions are not valid, (3) a feeling of helplessness and personal threat, and (4) a drive to link more closely costs and benefits.

The first two sets of conditions are closely interrelated. A loss of faith in the future and a mistrust of institutions are attributable in part to the failure of our concepts and attempts to provide the promised results. The first set of conditions reflects the era of dissillusionment in which we live. This dissillusionment is threatening long-standing ideals. The United States no longer has a "manifest destiny," and the deep scars of humiliation in Viet Nam and Iran will not soon disappear. Promises of the "Great Society" and the wide range of educational innovations, each a different side of the same coin, have not been fulfilled. Unemployment, poverty, racism and illiteracy are still with us despite the fanfare of announcement and the efforts which have been made. Our sense of the inevitability of progress is being diminished, and our sense of the achievable is being restricted.

The second set of conditions, a perception of the lack of validity of long-held concepts and solutions, results from doubt about the degree of understanding that we have about social and political movements. Long-held truisms are now demonstrably false. Religious-political warfare, once regarded as interesting never-to-be-repeated history, has been revived in Northern Ireland, Iran, and India-Pakistan. Nationalism, once considered to be dying, is sweeping aside what was considered an inevitable movement toward internationalism. Unemployment is no longer considered a cure for inflation, and such interesting new terms as "stagflation" are now common in our vocabulary. Allocation of ever increasing resources is no longer accepted as a single means of improving the human condition. It is becoming more apparent that many of the presumed answers are not answers at all and that repeated application of old solutions do not work. Unfulfilled

promises exact a toll in confidence and faith. The skepticism of nonbelievers has been reinforced, while the seeds of doubt have been cast among the believers.

The third set of conditions, the threat factor experienced by individuals and groups, creates an inevitable drive toward certainty and stability. One of the chief threat factors is inflation, which reduces the stability of virtually all individuals and groups, with each trying desperately to avoid the consequences of inflation. Inflation threatens the retired who live on fixed incomes; the poor, particularly the urban poor, who find necessities such as food and heat increasingly difficult to afford; and the middle class which finds a diminished ability to purchase current luxuries or to save for a stable retirement.

Adding to the feeling of threat are crime and the inability to predict and control the course of events. The increasing rate of crime is being experienced in all socioeconomic strata of society. Muggings, kidnappings, murders, and rape--of old and young, black, white, Puerto Rican, or Chicano--simply increase the drive toward physical security. The remarks of Chief Justice Warren Burger at a recent American Bar Association meeting decrying overprotection of the accused and underprotection of the victims reflect rather than lead much of the basic sentiment in the United States. Uncertanties concerning physical security are reinforced by other uncertainties. Shortages of all types suddenly appear, and, in many cases just as suddenly disappear; shortages of sugar, oil, peanuts, and coffee. Fuel escalator provisions often unexpectedly increase monthly fuel bills, and gasoline price increases are impossible to predict. No one factor is onerous to most individuals but the composite impact has created an increasing feeling of individual helplessness and frustration, and has served as a stimulant to strike back wherever and whenever possible in an effort to reassert a sense of individuality.

The fourth set of conditions, a closer linking between costs and benefits, includes the more deeply felt impact of costs and the perception that benefits might not be sufficiently great or might not occur at all. A small price is paid usually with little thought. A large expenditure is made usually after greater reflection. The failure of the economy to expand sufficiently rapidly is a major factor in the increased impact of costs. In a sufficiently expanding economy, income redistribution can be achieved by differential division of the <u>increase</u> in wealth. In a stagnant economy, income redistribution can occur only by taking what some already have and by giving it to others. Because the tax system is a primary means of income redistribution, the effects of inflation and the redistribution of wealth have become more closely linked. Inflation has increased dollar value of income but not real wealth, and has resulted in the "creeping tax bracket" phenomenon. Annual property taxes of $2,500 on a modest three bedroom house in a modest neighborhood[6] pinches individuals with modest incomes, irrespective of political ideology. Although real wealth does not increase, higher home values and higher income result in higher taxes. Such threats to existing standards of living provide powerful stimulation toward resistance to income redistribution and to payment for services.

Redistribution occurs in ways other than direct transfer of wealth. For example, there is redistribution of job opportunities as a mechanism for achieving long-term redistribution of wealth. As long as there is a sufficient number of jobs, affirmative action is an abstract philosophical consideration. When there is an insufficient number of jobs and when the choice is a job for a white

male or a job for a minority race member or a female, the test becomes much more stringent.

The specific benefits which are most highly valued constitute a question about future developments. Will an aging population value benefits to be derived from schooling as highly as that population will value benefits to be derived from programs designed for the elderly?

The Current Political Scene

To this point, I have tried to illustrate that there are many strands of conservatism which share commonalities but which also exhibit differences. During the last decade, the differences have become blurred and a greater unity of effort has been displayed. A more united conservative drive toward changing current directions is supported by other segments of the population who would not be labelled usually as "conservatives." These segments of the population are influenced by a loss of faith and trust, a perception that attempted solutions to societal problems have not been successful, a feeling of helplessness and personal threat, and a closer linking between costs and benefits. In such a situation, an invalid magnification of the impact of the revitalization of conservatism occurs, if all dissent concerning the status quo is attributed to the conservative movement.

Traditional classifications of political ideologies are no longer valid, if they ever were. As issues arise, alliances change. Individuals and groupings representing a broad spectrum of political ideology are found on both sides of such matters as right to life, creation of the Department of Education, affirmative action, and the proposed Lau regulations. While the position of different individuals and groups might be the same on a particular question, the motivations might or might not be the same. Politics has always been thus.

However, there are new elements. Although political organizations have dominated the scene for centuries, they are now much more integrated and pervasive. Modern technology has escalated the battle of ideologies into national and international arenas, and the effects of victory or defeat are no longer local or state-wide in scope. Mass communications, the telephone, radio, television, newspapers, and, now, word processing facilitate getting the message out. Computers permit the keeping of tabs on friend and foe, and make feasible massive fund raising campaigns. Air travel is used to move political workers from one geographical area to another. In short, modern technology represents an extension of power resources for those who have access to that technology.

Organizations and technology together with adequate funding permit the highlighting of issues in the minds of voters. Deliberate attempts are made to narrow the focus to a single issue. The politically potent single issue trend reduces the probability of compromise, emphasizes all or none in terms of that issue, and increases the probability of ideological confrontation.

A second new element is the power impact of a more agressive fundamentalism. Although fundamentalism has been historically apolitical, modern day fundamentalism is assuming a mode of political action. Although not all fundamentalists have become politically active, many have learned their political lessons rapidly

and well. Well organized, effectively using all the necessary technology, and well financed, the fundamentalist movement has had an impact beyond what might be expected from the actual number of politically active adherents. In recent years, political-fundamentalists have been extremely successful in employing strategies long employed by other political groups. (For example, the impression is given of significantly greater numbers than there actually are.) As a result, they have influence in significant ways on elections and state legislation.

It is important to dispel a misconception which distorts the current political scene, that is the notion that the cause of increasing conflicts concerning the nature of our society or the status of our schools is related to a breakdown in value consensus in the United States. In reality, there has never been a single value system in this Nation. Most slaves did not share the master's values; American Indians did not share the values of the invading Europeans; and fundamentalists have not and do not share the same values as do those in the humanist and scientific traditions. Value conflicts have been submerged over periods of time because dominant individuals and groups did have a basic value consensus. Long existing value conflicts surface because the bases of power include more divergent groups, because a greater number of individuals and groups are willing to challenge the value consensus of those who control the levers of power, because the rights of these individuals are more protected by the law, and because greater organization and the use of modern technology enhance capabilities of providing successful challenges. To yearn for a return to more quiescent periods of universal value consensus is to yearn for a world that never was.

Issues Concerning Schooling

Thus far, I have attempted to indicate that while conservatism is not a dominant force in contemporary society, its impact has been increased through a greater unity, through greater support from a political and agressive fundamentalism, and through effective use of modern technology in political action. I have also attempted to indicate that dissatisfaction with the status quo is not confined to conservatives and that greater numbers of not-so-ideologically aligned individuals are being stimulated by existing conditions to reexamine their assumptions and to question the future directions that society should take. Because of the wide-spread nature of the discontent, issues should be viewed in a different framework from the liberal-conservative dichotomy.

Criticisms of the schools come from large numbers of individuals who represent a wide range of political orientations. Often similar criticisms are heard from individuals and groups with opposing political orientations. Hence, it is an error to assume that all issues which affect schooling arise from narrow ideological conflicts. It is also an error to reduce many issues to school - anti-school terms.

One such issue is that of taxation. The drive to impede increases in taxes or to reduce taxes seems to stem from the more general societal problems of inflation and perceived threats to financial well being. For example, although many who voted for such measures as Proposition 13 in California might well have been opposed to then current levels of support for educational institutions, it is also clear that one major motivation of many who voted was to turn back persistently

increasing property taxes that were perceived to be becoming confiscatory. Surveys seem to confirm that the vote was not necessarily for reduced services but was for a reduction in taxes. Although one might argue that taxation and benefits should be closely related, the rationality of the voter points first to a reduction of the onerous. (Parenthetically, we might wonder how many school and university personnel support such tax cutting measures in the privacy of the voting booth.)

A second issue which should be viewed as being broader than a narrow ideological debate is the lack of accomplishment of the schools in teaching to a sufficiently large proportion of pupils the basic subjects such as reading and writing and arithmetic. Concern about more effective teaching of basic literacy is manifested by groups and individuals ranging from those who believe that schools whould teach only the 3 Rs to those who have a much broader view of what the curriculum should be. The competency test movement has been supported by conservatives and liberals, and by the educated and uneducated. This movement spread rapidly in a grassroots environment, indicating that a strong intuitive chord had been struck among the citizenry. To be noted is the almost spontaneous nature of this movement which initially was unorganized by national groups, and which did not have the benefit of any type of governmental support. It is a misreading of the concern about the effectiveness of schools to attribute the grassroots movement to conservatism or to assume that the concern will disappear as the political climate changes.

Criticisms about the lack of school effectiveness also reflect a widespread faith among the people that schools can and should be effective. Too often, this positive affirmation, which is implicit in the criticisms, is overlooked.

The lack of discipline and order in many schools is another issue which transcends narrow ideological orientation. Teacher unions document the physical assaults on teachers, newspapers highlight "drug busts"; and pupils are "shaken down" or "beaten up." While such conditions are not characteristic of a majority of schools, they occur frequently enough, and are experienced by a sufficiently large number of families to create public outcries. The outcry of a parent of a child "shaken down" or "beaten up" at school, or the concern of a parent about the use of drugs requires no particular political orientation.

There is an issue submerged just below the surface which will become more explicit within the next decade, and that is the issue of equal educational opportunity. The questioning of the desirability of equal educational opportunity is so at variance with current American ideals that the issue is seldom raised in direct and open fashion. While the overwhelming majority of Americans appears to support the ideal of equal educational opportunity, the ranks of those who are questioning this ideal appear to be increasing. The movement in support of tuition tax credits for elementary and secondary school pupils appears to reflect a retreat by some from a commitment to equal educational opportunities for all. For some in our society, equal educational opportunity was never an ideal; for others, because of the difficulties encountered in achieving the ideal, there is a growing wonder if such an ideal can be actualized. For still others, the costs, in their perceptions, are beginning to outweigh the benefits. Grumblings about the excessive costs of educating the handicapped at the expense of the average child, complaints about undue resources being devoted to the education of the poor (in

part a product of the leveling down in school finance equalization attempts) and growls that minorities are given "unfair" advantages are symtomatic of the tendency to pull back from commitment to equal educational opportunities, or to paying the necessary costs to achieve that ideal. Although there are a few conservatives who articulate such questions, one of whom wrote explicitly of "The Phantom of Equal Education,"[7] there are many who are considered of "liberal" persuasion who seem to have deserted more subtly the common school in favor of more privileged schooling for some. The sizeable group of middle of the roaders, who feel free to select from both liberal and conservative orientations, will decide the question of equal educational opportunities for all.

The most difficult problems and the most serious ideological disputes center on the curriculum and the textbooks associated with the curriculum. All such disputes do not follow liberal-conservative lines. A curriculum is an embodiment of the values that a school seeks to transmit. Because there can be no value-free curriculum, societal value conflicts tend to become more pointed and intense in matters of schooling. Families seek to transmit values to their children, and they seek to perpetuate those values through their children. The intensity results from the fact that children are required to enroll in schools because of school attendance laws, and schools transmit values, values which may negate those held dear by the family. Because pupils with differing value orientations are taught in the same room at the same time, it is impossible to plan for transmission of different values to different pupils. In schools in which the values transmitted are congruent with those of the parents, there is no conflict. The school simply reenforces familial values. However, in schools in which the values of some parents are sharply different from those contained in the curriculum, conflicts arise. Value conflict problems are manifested repeatedly in various ways such as issues involving the effects of schools on values and identity of minority children or on fundamentalist children. Although such problems can be resolved by the creation of schools with different value orientations, the cohesiveness of society might be destroyed.

Conflict levels are heightened by attempts to institutionalize a greater and greater range of values through the use of governmental power. Such use of governmental power, in turn, sparks debates which center ostensibly around the issue of the proper role of government. However, often the real issue is the particular doctrine which should be imposed upon pupils by government through the schools. In most instances, it is the particular doctrine to be imposed and not the status of governmental control which separates ideologically opposed parties. There are those who insist that mandatory prayer be returned to the public schools but who object to mandatory reading of certain books. There are those who resist vehemently the return of mandatory prayer but who insist equally strongly on the validity of teaching what is known as "situation ethics." It has been interesting to observe the negative reactions to fundamental alternative schools by some of the advocates of alternative free schools. To one side, removal from book shelves of Little Black Sambo is censorship but the removal of Soul on Ice is not, and vice versa.

Professionals have displayed a notable arrogance and insensitivity in the impositions of value laden areas in the curriculum. New areas have been incorporated into the curriculum with the notion that despite possible violation of the values of some families, the areas are both essential and right. Actions reflect the assumption that there is an ever-widening set of absolute values

which everyone must share. The widening of the range of values encompassed in institutionalized school curricula increases the value conflicts which are likely to occur. The textbook has always been one means of institutionalizing values in the curriculum. In more recent years, instructional packages oriented in specific value directions have been developed and widely used. Such areas as sex education and situation ethics have been added to the curriculum. To those whose orientations are congruent with values added to the curriculum, the results are pleasing. To those who object, the result is alienation.

Because, in many cases, those who have objected to certain aspects of the curriculum have been viewed as being extremist in their political orientations, their views have been dismissed. A close analysis will indicate, however, that areas such as sex education, situation ethics, values clarification, and the use of materials which contain a great deal of obscenity or which are sexually explicit, violate the sensitivities and values of many families who are not extreme in their ideological orientations and who would not be classified as "far right."

It is perhaps helpful to visualize a continuum of values. Inasmuch as human beings hold many values and inasmuch as all of these values seldom fall at a single point along a continuum, values held by one individual will fall at different points along a continuum. It is not at all unusual to note that within the same individual there are contradictory values. If the analysis earlier in this discussion is correct, the values of most Americans will tend to cluster around the midpoint. In many cases, such clusters will overlap others which are clustered more toward the endpoints. Values which cluster at the endpoints will have overlap with those centered at the midpoint. The utility of this conceptualization is that it illustrates that some values held by those who have widely divergent value systems might well be shared by those whose value system tends to be more in the mainstream of contemporary life. Hence, situation ethics or sex education might be opposed by individuals who are moderate in orientation as well as by those who are more divergent in their orientation. It is important to understand that the same value position on an issue does not imply the same overall value orientation.

The overlapping of clusters concept helps to explain the impact that ultra conservative groups have had. While basic world views might be quite different, there can be congruence in terms of certain value positions among or between ultra conservatives and moderates and liberals. This analytical approach assists in understanding a variety of popular reactions to the schools. Approximately five years ago, I used with a group of Minnesota superintendents a case based upon the Kanawha County, West Virginia textbook controversy. I used the case because I thought that the incidents would be so foreign to those administrators that they could "warm up" in discussion without feeling personally involved and threatened. Much to my surprise, virtually every administrator could identify with the situation, and asserted that similar situations could occur in Minnesota. I think that the explanation for this reaction is not that fundamentalism is so strong in Minnesota, but that some of the value conflicts evidenced in Kanawha County also exist in Minnesota.

What distinguishes particular conservative groupings is not a particular stand on a particular issue, but the value clusterings along a continuum. Such a clustering toward the far right is revealed by Barbara M. Morris in a recent article in the Phi Delta Kappan[8] in which she outlined the issues from her

vantage point. These include: the transmission of secular humanism as exemplified by the Humanist Manifest II, the invasion of privacy by means of values clarification, behavior modification, role playing and group dynamics, the failure to transmit basic skills and other aspects of a traditional body of knowledge, and the "preparation of teachers to function as agents of social, political, and economic change, not as teachers." Although Ms. Morris develops these and other themes in her article, the listing gives a clear indication of her point of view. The same clustering of values may be found in the beliefs of fundamentalists. To outsiders, it is not understood that the world view of many fundamentalists is based on the Bible as the revealed and infallible Word of God, a view which stands in sharp juxtaposition to that based on the tradition of reason and empiricism. There is little to compromise between these two world views.[9] For the fundamentalist, much of the usual school curriculum represents a negation of deep-rooted beliefs. Creationism cannot be reconciled with evolution. In such instances, the value clusters are so divergent that the common school is unable to make accommodations. It is important to understand that those whose values cluster at the endpoints of the continuum really do not seek accommodation except as an expedient. If given the opportunity, they would impose their values on all.

It appears that most of the values manifested in school curricula are shared by most Americans. Some values manifested in the schools are shared by a smaller proportion of Americans, and are antithetical to those held by many including some identified with the wide spectrum of political orientation. If there are sufficient overlaps in value clusters, accommodations can be reached. If there is insufficient or no overlap, accommodation is impossible.

Implication for Teacher Education

Existing conditions as they affect the political scene and the issues concerning schooling all have profound implications for teacher education. The schools and teacher education are inextricably bound together. Teacher education provides teachers and teacher education faculty members write textbooks, produce curriculum materials, introduce different instructional strategies, engage in research and make pronouncements about the condition of education. Consequently, perceived shortcomings of the schools, by extension, are perceived as shortcomings of teacher education.

The first implication for teacher education is the need to admit the reality of problems being faced by the schools and to make sustained and deliberate attempts to help the schools resolve those problems. Problem denial or disavowal of at least partial responsibility for those problems will serve only to increase the credibility gap between teacher education and a large segment of the citizenry. As has been indicated, concerns about the levels of pupil achievement are held by a broad spectrum of the American public, and closely associated with those concerns is a growing criticism of the quality of teacher education programs. Along with tests of the competencies of students, we have seen the drive to test the competencies of teachers. Notes to parents which contain grammatical and/or spelling errors, and lack of knowledge of the subject matter as displayed through the teaching of inaccurate information are too frequent to ignore, and fuel the

criticisms of teacher education programs. To attribute concern about teacher competency to a spreading spirit of conservatism is to seriously misread the public mood. A rational response would be a vigorous move to upgrade sharply the quality of the graduates of many of our teacher education programs. An alternative would be to differentiate publicly between those teacher education programs which produce qualified graduates and those which do not, so that teacher education programs are not all painted with the same brush.

The short-term goal should be to demonstrate that graduates of teacher education programs manifest an acceptable level of general education, knowledge of the teaching field, and professional knowledge. The long-term objective should be to demonstrate the superior teaching effectiveness of graduates of teacher education programs when compared with those who have not completed such programs. If such superiority cannot be demonstrated, there should be legitimate doubt about support for teacher education. The era of "trust us" and "believe in our evaluations," is over. Teacher education, if it is to maintain public confidence, should be prepared to demonstrate more clearly its effectiveness in helping to improve instruction in the schools.

Coming to grips with the reality of the problems experienced by the schools also means an avoidance of hard-sell peddling of instructional panaceas. Overpromise has diminished faith and trust in teacher education and in the ability of schools to deliver. Dissemination of unvalidated instructional packages which have been only supported by a multitude of testimonials or by the faith of the developers is a practice which would not be tolerated in other professional fields. In addition to greater self-discipline, perhaps teacher education needs to develop a mechanism to validate, in rigorous fashion, proposed innovations so that certification may be made concerning their effectiveness. Although the public does not appear to oppose experimentation and innovations, there is indication of growing resistance to implementation of a series of insufficiently tested new practices.

A second implication for teacher education is that there is a need to give greater emphasis in our own thinking and in professional preparation programs to serious study of the history and philosophy of education. As teacher education programs have moved away from serious study of the history and philosophy of education, there has been a tendency to view schooling as something separate and apart from society, its assumptions, aspirations, and logic. We have tended to ignore the insights concerning the relationships between society and education which were developed by philosophers ranging from Plato to Saint Thomas Aquinas to John Dewey. Despite the tendency of professional preparation programs to isolate the process of education from its social context, the citizenry seems to sense intuitively the intimate relationships between society and its educative mechanisms. As this discussion has attempted to illustrate, societal issues are very much with us. An understanding of these issues is essential if teachers are to comprehend the context of their efforts.

The second implication is related closely to the third, which is the need to come to grips with the essential values which should be transmitted by the schools. The need to reexamine the appropriate value positions represented by the schools is not motivated by concern about the impact of conservative forces.

Rather the need for reexamination is stimulated by the basic societal issues which have been raised as the range of values incorporated into the school curriculum has increased. The basic issue is concerned with how pluralistic our society can and should be, and how supportive the schools should be of that pluralism. I hope that the direction is not toward the establishment of a single value system in the United States, but that the direction is to foster, within tolerable limits, multiple value systems. I suggest that the only way to promote a pluralistic society is to halt the steady increase in the range of values which have already been institutionalized. The view should be toward reducing the range of institutionalized values to the minimum needed to maintain societal cohesiveness and effectiveness and to facilitate the life chances of pupils. It should be noted that there is a significant difference between values held by teachers which may differ from values held by other teachers and the institutionally determined values contained in textbooks, curriculum content and materials designed for teacher use. Restriction of the range of values institutionalized in school curricula to essential core values reduces conflicts among many conservatives, liberals, and middle of the roaders. Such restriction can also enhance a common base of support for the schools.

The questions concerning values as manifested by the schools are very much related to questions about appropriate limits to the right of the state to impinge upon the individual. Addressing such questions in honest fashion requires examination as to whether or not particular values urged for schools reflect basic societal principles or whether or not they reflect our own ideological predispositions. One of the tests which might be employed is to imagine our stance if an opposing ideology were to determine the substantive values to be inculcated by the schools.

It is also important to avoid rationalization in the process of determining which values are essential. The existence of a need does not imply that it is the responsibility of the school to fulfill that need. If certain responsibilities are judged to rest with the family, then efforts should be made to strengthen the capabilities of the family rather than to meet the need directly through the schools. In each instance in which individual or family responsibilities are preempted by institutions, dependence upon those institutions is increased.

Even if schools were to reduce institutionalized values to essentials, there will continue to be irreconciliable conflicts among value systems. A case in point is the mutual exclusiveness between the value system of fundamentalists and that of the mainstream of western civilization. In such cases, sensitivity and respect rather than disregard and disdain should be the rule. Societal cohesion and effectiveness are obtained at deep cost to those whose values cluster toward the endpoints of the continuum. The goal should be to achieve the essentials for both the individual and society, and should not be the total destruction of divergent values.

A fourth implication is that teacher education can anticipate increasing criticism and attack. Criticisms of teacher education have existed since the beginning days of teacher education programs. Such criticisms have had their origin in faculties of arts and sciences as well as among parents, anti-school forces, teacher groups, local administrators, and state departments of education. What is different today is that the discontented groups are larger, more powerful,

and better organized, and the streams of discontent converge on teacher education as they do on other aspects of our society. The fundamentalists, who regard teacher education institutions as hotbeds of secular humanism, will be particularly aggressive in their attacks. The most responsible and effective stance is to accept legitimate criticisms which arise from broad segments of the population, and to respond temperately and sensitively to those groups whose basic values are at variance with the mainstream of contemporary society.

Basic Principles

I do not advocate a retreat from value positions. Rather, I suggest that there be a restriction of attempts to impose an ever-widening range of values upon those who do not hold such values. I also suggest that teacher education be based upon a set of fundamental principles which are essential for a pluralistic society. These fundamental principles are:

1. A belief in the integrity of each human being and treatment of each human being with respect, irrespective of differing values.
2. An unflagging opposition to any form of discrimination based on race, sex, religion, ethnic origin, or handicapping conditions.
3. A dedication to equal educational opportunity for all individuals. This means a commitment to the continued viability of the common school.
4. A determination to preserve a pluralistic society and to resist any attempt by any group through government to eliminate value differences other than those values which are <u>essential</u> to our society.
5. A resolve to insure that the curriculum is sufficiently broad and that instruction is sufficiently effective to maximize the life chances of each pupil. This means a resistance to attempts to reduce the curriculum to only the 3 Rs.

Although adherence to such basic principles will not eliminate criticisms and attacks (and may, in fact, increase such criticisms and attacks from some quarters), such adherence assures the integrity of teacher education and displays a commitment to achieve a free and open society.

NOTES

1. Jerome S. Bruner, "Preface," The Process of Education, Harvard University Press, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1977), p. XI.

2. "Who's Who on the Right," Newsweek, February 2, 1981, p. 60.

3. "Is Reagan Not a Reaganite?", Newsweek, January 19, 1981, p. 19.

4. American Council on Education, The American Freshman National Norms for Fall 1980, as reported in The Chronicle of Higher Education, February 9, 1981, pp. 5, 7-8.

5. Chicago Sun Times story reprinted in Raleigh, North Carolina, The News and Observer, January 29, 1981

6. Tom Buckley, "After Javits, The G.O.P. Turns Right With D'Amato," New York Times Magazine, October 19, 1980, p. 129.

7. Connaught Coyne Mashner, Blackboard Tyranny, Arlington House Publishers, (New Rochelle, New York: 1978), pp. 318-320.

8. Barbara M. Morris, "The Real Issues in Education as Seen by a Journalist on the Far Right," Phi Delta Kappan, May 1980, pp. 613-615.

9. A lucid discussion of the mutually exclusive nature of fundamentalism and the scientific and humanist tradition is contained in George Hillock's "Of Books and Bombs: Ideological Conflict and the Schools, A Case Study of the Kanawha County Book Protest," University of Chicago, unpublished paper.